



Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area was 3 percent in April, up one-tenth of a point from March. April's unemployment rate was six-tenths of a percentage point lower than April 2005. The civilian labor force increased by 2,400 in April, climbing above 290,000 for the first time in 2006. Total employment increased also as 2,200 more people found work in April. Job creation fell just 200 short of accommodating all the new entrants into the labor force. Despite the increase in April's unemployment rate, the labor force and total employment should continue to move upward as more and more people will likely be entering the job market during the traditionally busy late spring and summer months.

Nonfarm payroll jobs in the Boise metropolitan area continued their upward movement in April, growing by 3,200 to exceed 266,000. That is a 5.9 percent increase, or 15,000 nonfarm jobs, from a year earlier. Construction continues to be the largest contributor. There were 900 more construction jobs in April, 28 per-

Southwestern Idaho Table 2: April 2006
Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Figures for Southwestern Idaho Counties

| | Civilian Labor Force | Number Unemployed | Percent Unemployed | Number Employed |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Ada | 194,738 | 5,448 | 2.8 | 189,291 |
| Adams | 1,964 | 126 | 6.4 | 1,838 |
| Boise | 3,629 | 137 | 3.8 | 3,493 |
| Canyon | 81,013 | 2,636 | 3.3 | 78,377 |
| Elmore | 10,962 | 505 | 4.6 | 10,457 |
| Gem | 7,861 | 328 | 4.2 | 7,533 |
| Owyhee | 5,099 | 104 | 2.0 | 4,995 |
| Payette | 10,546 | 545 | 5.2 | 10,000 |
| Valley | 5,076 | 180 | 3.5 | 4,896 |
| Washington | 5,211 | 238 | 4.6 | 4,973 |
| Statewide | 761,166 | 25,630 | 3.4 | 735,536 |

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

| | Apr 2006* | Mar 2006 | Apr 2005 | % Change | |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | Last Month | Last Year |
| INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE | | | | | |
| Seasonally Adjusted | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 292,400 | 290,000 | 281,300 | 0.8 | 3.9 |
| Unemployment | 8,700 | 8,500 | 10,200 | 2.4 | -14.7 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.6 | | |
| Total Employment | 283,700 | 281,500 | 271,100 | 0.8 | 4.6 |
| Unadjusted | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 291,400 | 291,100 | 281,900 | 0.1 | 3.4 |
| Unemployment | 8,800 | 9,500 | 10,500 | -7.4 | -16.2 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.7 | | |
| Total Employment | 282,600 | 281,600 | 271,400 | 0.4 | 4.1 |
| JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK | | | | | |
| Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** | 266,200 | 263,000 | 251,300 | 1.2 | 5.9 |
| GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES | 52,500 | 51,200 | 48,200 | 2.5 | 8.9 |
| Natural Resources & Construction | | | | | |
| Construction | 21,900 | 21,100 | 18,500 | 3.8 | 18.4 |
| Manufacturing | 21,700 | 20,800 | 18,900 | 4.3 | 14.8 |
| Durable Goods | 30,600 | 30,100 | 29,700 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| Wood Product Manufacturing | 24,400 | 24,000 | 23,500 | 1.7 | 3.8 |
| Fabricated Metal Products Mfg. | 2,100 | 2,200 | 2,100 | -4.5 | 0.0 |
| Machinery Manufacturing | 1,400 | 1,400 | 1,300 | 0.0 | 7.7 |
| Computer & Electronic Manufacturing | 1,300 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 8.3 | 8.3 |
| Transportation Equipment Mfg. | 14,000 | 14,000 | 14,400 | 0.0 | -2.8 |
| Other Durable Goods | 2,200 | 2,200 | 2,100 | 0.0 | 4.8 |
| Nondurable Goods | 3,400 | 3,000 | 2,400 | 13.3 | 41.7 |
| Food Manufacturing | 6,200 | 6,100 | 6,200 | 1.6 | 0.0 |
| Printing & Related Support Activities | 4,300 | 4,200 | 4,400 | 2.4 | -2.3 |
| Other Nondurable Goods | 700 | 700 | 700 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES | 213,700 | 211,800 | 203,100 | 0.9 | 5.2 |
| Trade, Transportation, & Utilities | | | | | |
| Trade | 51,900 | 51,400 | 47,500 | 1.0 | 9.3 |
| Wholesale Trade | 44,400 | 44,100 | 40,600 | 0.7 | 9.4 |
| Wholesalers, Durable Goods | 12,300 | 12,100 | 11,300 | 1.7 | 8.8 |
| Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods | 7,300 | 7,300 | 6,900 | 1.4 | 5.8 |
| Retail Trade | 3,500 | 3,500 | 3,400 | 0.0 | 2.9 |
| Food & Beverage Stores | 32,100 | 32,000 | 29,300 | 0.3 | 9.6 |
| General Merchandise Stores | 4,400 | 4,300 | 4,200 | 2.3 | 4.8 |
| All Other Retail Trade | 6,300 | 6,400 | 6,000 | -1.6 | 5.0 |
| Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities | 21,400 | 21,300 | 19,100 | 0.5 | 12.0 |
| Utilities | 7,500 | 7,300 | 6,900 | 2.7 | 8.7 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 600 | 600 | 600 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Information | 6,900 | 6,700 | 6,300 | 3.0 | 9.5 |
| Telecommunications | 5,200 | 5,200 | 5,100 | 0.0 | 2.0 |
| Financial Activities | 2,400 | 2,300 | 2,200 | 4.3 | 9.1 |
| Finance & Insurance | 14,500 | 14,400 | 15,600 | 0.7 | -7.1 |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 10,200 | 10,100 | 4,700 | 1.0 | 117.0 |
| Professional & Business Services | 4,300 | 4,300 | 10,900 | 0.0 | -60.6 |
| Professional, Scientific, & Technical | 38,200 | 37,400 | 36,800 | 2.1 | 3.8 |
| Management of Companies & Ent. | 11,300 | 11,200 | 10,900 | 0.9 | 3.7 |
| Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt. | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,600 | 0.0 | 3.6 |
| Educational & Health Services | 21,100 | 20,400 | 20,300 | 3.4 | 3.9 |
| Educational Services | 32,000 | 31,900 | 30,900 | 0.3 | 3.6 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 3,100 | 3,000 | 2,800 | 3.3 | 10.7 |
| Hospitals | 28,900 | 28,900 | 28,100 | 0.0 | 2.8 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 9,400 | 9,400 | 9,200 | 0.0 | 2.2 |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation | 22,900 | 22,700 | 21,600 | 0.9 | 6.0 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 3,200 | 3,300 | 2,600 | -3.0 | 23.1 |
| Accommodation | 19,700 | 19,400 | 19,000 | 1.5 | 3.7 |
| Food Services & Drinking Places | 2,100 | 2,100 | 2,100 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Other Services | 17,600 | 17,300 | 16,900 | 1.7 | 4.1 |
| Total Government | 7,400 | 7,300 | 6,100 | 1.4 | 21.3 |
| Federal Government | 41,600 | 41,500 | 39,500 | 0.2 | 5.3 |
| State & Local Government | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,600 | 0.0 | -1.8 |
| State Government | 36,100 | 36,000 | 33,900 | 0.3 | 6.5 |
| State Government Education | 13,900 | 13,700 | 13,400 | 1.5 | 3.7 |
| State Government Administration | 4,800 | 4,900 | 4,700 | -2.0 | 2.1 |
| Local Government | 9,100 | 8,800 | 8,700 | 3.4 | 4.6 |
| Local Government Education | 22,200 | 22,300 | 20,500 | -0.4 | 8.3 |
| Local Government Administration | 14,000 | 14,100 | 12,600 | -0.7 | 11.1 |
| | 8,200 | 8,200 | 7,900 | 0.0 | 3.8 |

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

cent of all the new jobs created in that month. That is a significant contribution from an industry that only makes up 8.2 percent of all nonfarm jobs. The other strong growth industry in April was administrative and support and waste management services, which includes temporary employment agencies that are driving this sector's growth. Employers often turn to these agencies in times of high demand when they are too busy to look for employees or just simply cannot find enough workers. Administrative and support and waste management added 700 jobs in April, 22 percent of all new jobs. At the same time, the sector accounts for only 7.9 percent of total nonfarm jobs. It is important to point out that these two sectors accounted for half the new jobs in April while making up only 16 percent of total nonfarm jobs. The April civilian labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in the area are shown in Southwestern Idaho Table 2 on page 13.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Boise Metropolitan Area

- Micron Technology has developed a new digital sensor designed to be used in smaller digital cameras and cellular phones that will let the user take high definition videos and higher quality pictures. The product is an 8 megapixel digital image sensor, and it will be made starting in early 2007 in both Idaho and Italy. The image quality that will be available by using a product with one of these sensors will be comparable to what can now only be found by using more costly equipment.
- According to the most recent Wells Fargo Boise Area Cost of Living Report, the cost of living in the region was up by 1.1 percent in April, a full half percent higher than the national Consumer Price Index. Fuel costs are largely the cause of this large jump as Idaho's largest urban center suffered gasoline price increases in April of 50 cents per gallon. Transportation costs in the region have increased 9.9 percent over the last six months compared to 5.5 percent nationwide. The metropolitan housing costs also increased faster than the national average, climbing 0.9 percent in April compared with 0.2 percent across the country.
- Corey Barton Homes based in Meridian was recently ranked at number 57 by Builder Magazine in its list of top 100 homebuilders in the nation. This makes Corey Barton Homes the largest privately owned builder in the Northwest and is a move up the list from number 67 last year. Builder Magazine's list is based on the number of homes sold. Corey Barton Homes sold 1,848 homes in 2005, an increase of 31 percent from 2004. Hubble Homes, also of Meridian, ranked number 109 on the same list.
- Idaho was recently named as the host of the 2009 World Winter Games of the Special Olympics. The games will mostly be held in southwestern Idaho at Boise State University, Tamarack Resort, Qwest Arena, Bogus Basin and Idaho Ice World. Idaho beat out cities in Nevada, Austria and Germany for hosting the games.
- Caldwell's Sky Ranch Business Park, located adjacent to the airport, recently confirmed its first business will be American Custom Coach of Ontario, Calif. The new business hopes to be operating by fall and will employ approximately 18 people but hopefully doubling its work force within a year. American Custom Coach makes armored vehicles out of common, everyday cars and serves law enforcement agencies, celebrities and hospitals among others. About half of the business' finished products are shipped overseas.
- Idaho Power Co. added a record 16,737 new customers in 2005, and the trend continued through the first quarter of 2006. In the first quarter the company added another 3,369 new customers. This was 10.5 percent more new customers than in the first quarter 2005. Idaho Power serves over 460,000 customers in Idaho and Oregon.
- As a result of robust growth in new customer accounts, Idaho Power has aggressive plans for increasing generating capacities throughout its service area. According to company officials, Idaho Power plans to spend over \$700 million on new power plants and improving transmission and generation systems. This major expansion is due almost entirely to the rapid customer growth the company has experienced in recent years.
- The Micron Technology Foundation recently announced it is giving Boise State University \$5 million over the next several years to further fund the doctoral program that Micron began supporting in 2005. The money will be used to pay for instructors, provide living stipends for students, pay for improvements to the labs and purchase the latest equipment.
- Micron Technology recently announced another joint venture that will give it 50.01 percent ownership of Photronics of Connecticut. The two companies have teamed up to form MP Mask Technology Center, which will design and manufacture photomasks that will allow Micron and other chip manufacturers to build smaller microchips. Photomasks have microscopic patterns on them of circuits which are transferred to semiconductor wafers using light. The resulting pattern then details where to put the components that go on the chips. Micron and Photronics will build a new facility for this joint venture and will create about 75 new jobs. The companies hope to be in production by late 2007.
- According to the Intermountain Multiple Listing Service, the number of homes sold in Canyon County during April increased for the second month in a

row, rising 3 percent over March. The number of home sales in both March and April were about 100 more than in the same months of 2005. Median prices also increased significantly rising from \$118,000 in April 2005 to \$159,000 in April 2006, a 34.7 percent increase.

- April construction permitting activity was mixed around the region. Caldwell led the way, issuing permits for 45.2 percent more in construction value than in April 2005. Nampa followed closely, permitting 42 percent more. The city of Meridian permitted 3 percent more while the city of Boise actually saw a decline of 27 percent in total values of projects permitted. Cumulatively, the number of permits issued in April was down from April 2005 by just 3.2 percent. Despite the decline in the number of permits, the cumulative dollar value of the permits issued by the area's four largest cities increased by 1.1 percent or approximately \$1.7 million over the same month in 2005.
- Through the first quarter of 2006, home sales in the metropolitan area shattered year-ago totals in both the number of homes sold and in dollar value. This is exceptional considering 2005's record setting year of \$3.7 billion in home sales and an 8 percent slowdown in the number of sales nationwide. During the first quarter of 2006 in Ada County, 2,709 homes were sold, an increase of 36.5 percent over first quarter 2005. In addition, the average price of homes sold was \$253,589, up 23.8 percent over the same time period a year earlier. In Canyon County, 1,405 homes were sold, an increase of 42.6 percent over first quarter 2005. Similar to Ada County, the average price of the homes sold increased significantly from \$125,800 in first quarter 2005 to \$165,602 in first quarter 2006, 31.6 percent increase.
- The rapid escalation in area's home prices could be curbed in the next two years. Between Ada and Canyon counties, there are currently over 33,000 residential building lots at some point in the approval and permitting pipeline. Ada County has nearly 11,000 acres of land and over 22,000 building lots somewhere in the approval process. Meridian leads the way with 30 percent of the acreage under consideration and 43.8 percent of the building lots. Canyon County has over 5,000 acres of land in preliminary stages of approval. It contains over 11,000 building lots. Caldwell leads the way with 37 percent of the land and 59 percent of the building lots.

Valley County

- Tamarack Resort located near Donnelly recently publicized earnings for its first full fiscal year, which ran from May 1, 2005, to April 30, 2006. The resort's total revenue for the fiscal year was \$99.8 million. About \$89 million was earned through real estate sales. A total of \$8.4 million was earned from oper-

ating the resort, \$5.5 million of that during the winter, and the last \$2.4 million was earned through the resort's nonprofit municipal association.

- Valley County has issued homeowners at Tamarack Resort 127 certificates of occupancy so far. In addition to the residential certificates, the county has issued Tamarack 32 commercial certificates of occupancy for various operations including 94 hotel and other living units.
- California has edged out Idaho as the top state where buyers of property at Tamarack Resort reside. Thirty-three percent of the buyers are from California while 32 percent are from Idaho. About 5.2 percent of the lots have gone to buyers outside of the United States.
- Scheduled to open this summer at the Tamarack Resort are two new facilities. The first is the Arling Conference Center slated to open June 16, and the second is a new 5,000 square-foot restaurant at mid-mountain, which is slated to open late this summer.
- Mile High Marina on Payette Lake is getting a \$600,000 facelift. Crews are currently removing the old docks at the marina, and new docks and slips will soon be constructed by Inland Marine.

Elmore County

- Standard Plumbing of Mountain Home is currently building a new warehouse where it will move its plumbing operations. The old building will not stay idle, however, as Standard has plans to add heating and cooling services to its business.

Adams County

- Composite Systems Inc. has been working with the city of Council to bring a new business to the city and approximately 25 to 30 new jobs over the next three years. Composite Systems would like to be up and running by fall of 2007. The company manufactures products for the construction, aerospace and automotive industries, using highly advanced robotics technology. The company would like to locate at the business park.

Payette County

- Voters in the Fruitland School District recently passed a \$1.9 million supplemental school bond. The funds will be used to build a new primary school.

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